



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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County Executive

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING
Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

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Green Infrastructure Advisory Group Meeting #5 January 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Details

Meeting date and time: January 16, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Meeting location: 30 North Market Street, Frederick, MD 21701

II. Attendance

Advisory Group members present: Jim Humerick, Lindsey Donaldson, Karen Russell, Troy Kitch, Abraham Olsson, Amy Rembold, David Lillard, Barry Salisbury, Karen Cannon, Denny Remsburg, Mike Spurrier, Scott Burrall

Advisory Group members absent: Benjamin Friton

County staff: Karin Flom, Kimberly Gaines, Andrew Stine, Denis Superczynski

III. Call to Order

Mr. Stine brought the meeting to order at 2:01 PM, welcomed the advisory group members, and provided guidelines for the meeting as well as directions for accessing meeting materials and contacting staff via the Green Infrastructure Plan website.

IV. Review of Meeting #4

Mr. Stine conducted a review of the materials generated for Advisory Group Meeting #4, held January 9, 2025, as part of the next item on the agenda.

He noted that the minutes for the fourth meeting were distributed with the invitation to Advisory Group Meeting #5, were provided to members as part of the Meeting #5 printed materials, and copies were available to meeting attendees on a Green Infrastructure Plan documents table. Mr. Stine asked the Advisory Group members if there were any comments or questions regarding the minutes as prepared, and none were raised.

Mr. Stine also highlighted topics from the Advisory Group's discussions during the fourth meeting as important "takeaways" that should be addressed in the Green Infrastructure Plan. These included:

- A need to discuss the functions and importance of riparian buffers for streams and rivers throughout Frederick County.

- A need to address the interface(s) between green infrastructure, working lands, and to address how this can relate to local food security.
- The potential to utilize a framework of “threats” and “opportunities” to frame the discussion in the plan, provide evidence of the need for green infrastructure implementation, demonstrate the immediacy of the issues discussed, and to prioritize policies and recommendations.
- A need to comprehensively address the varying types of habitats that exist in Frederick County and can be preserved as part of a green infrastructure network.
- A need to discuss the various implications of exotic and invasive species for the natural environment in Frederick County and to investigate available mapping options.

The following “takeaways” were noted from the Advisory Group’s discussion of the interface between the Green Infrastructure Plan and concurrent work on the Housing Element of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

- Planners should continue to think intelligently about future growth and the allocation of housing to help preserve green infrastructure where it exists.
- Both plans should address the ability of green infrastructure to help with issues like flooding, heat islands, stormwater run-off, and to indicate how green infrastructure can augment local open/green space to improve residents’ quality of life.
- Look into communities that are “smart-sizing” renewable energy to provide a local benefit (without creating an offsetting aesthetic or functional burden) and look into communities that are reconsidering traditional uses for open space to address aspects of community health and food security.

V. Discussion - Green Infrastructure & Workforce/Employment

As a continuation of activities from the fourth Advisory Group meeting, staff and the Advisory Group also conducted a discussion regarding potential areas of overlap between the Green Infrastructure Plan and the Investing in Workers and Workplaces Plan (IW2).

A series of questions was asked of the Advisory Group regarding potential areas of interface between the two plans, including:

1. *Following the adoption of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in 2021, there has been much discussion surrounding the development of a “green workforce” to assist in the nation’s transition to a more resilient and sustainable future. Where do you see the potential opportunities for green workforce development associated with the Frederick County Green Infrastructure Plan?*

Members of the Advisory Group identified several potential industries that could support a green workforce development in Frederick County including:

- Fostering the development of green and renewable building materials. The County has a history of producing masonry and aggregate that can be processed locally and delivered locally (with low embodied energy/carbon). The use of local timber is also a topic that could be explored, but only in a manner that addresses the importance of responsible and sustainable utilization.

- Developing jobs related to sustainable energy production, with a particular focus on electricians and solar system installers.
 - Developing a “green building” workforce capable of constructing, evaluating, and certifying LEED, Green Globes, or other established systems for ensuring sustainable and energy efficient buildings. Additionally, more workforce training is needed for green infrastructure practices for stormwater management, including rain gardens, sand filters, riparian buffer establishment, and the maintenance of such practices.
 - Developing more growers and suppliers of landscape and nursery stock (particularly native and naturalized species), and experts in the installation and maintenance of urban tree canopy.
 - Developing a workforce related to the design, installation, and inspection of Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help support the implementation of BMPs to improve farm function and protect natural resources.
 - Developing a workforce related to the control of weeds and invasive vegetation in the County. The County has weed control staff, but the number of employees dedicated to this work is limited. Increasing the weed control workforce could help manage invasive species in road rights-of-way and lessen efforts devoted to invasive species (weed) management by farmers. Members of the group also identified whitetail deer population management as a potential tool for fostering the recovery of native vegetation (eliminating browsing pressure). Individuals with the skill and knowledge needed to safely and effectively manage whitetail populations are not always readily located. Fostering the development of more people with these skills could help the greater goal of management of invasive species.
 - Frederick County has a prominent health care industry, and a continued focus on not only health, but jobs related the relationship between outdoor recreation and community health, could be considered in the Plan.
 - The Advisory Group highlighted the role of public transit in reducing the amount of vehicle miles travelled in the County, and the support and future development of the County’s TransIT workforce was highlighted as a potential topic.
2. *One focus of the Workers and Workplaces Plan is the identification of opportunity areas for commercial and industrial land-use within the County to 1) diversify the local tax base and 2) provide opportunities for Frederick County residents to work closer to where they live (thus reducing VMT). Are there any areas of the County in which additional commercial or industrial uses could be incorporated – including redevelopment activity - while minimizing negative impacts to green infrastructure or natural resources?*

The Advisory Group highlighted several potential opportunities to help bolster local businesses while minimizing negative impacts to green infrastructure. The first involved continued efforts to build-out broadband capacity in the County. There are still many places in the County where telework is difficult or not possible due to slow or inconsistent internet speeds. Additionally, the internet continues to change the way businesses operate, and

widely available, high-speed internet access throughout the county should be viewed as a type of infrastructure of equal import with roads and water or sewer service.

The Advisory Group also highlighted the potential to create incentives for redevelopment within older industrial areas in the County. The benefits of redeveloping older industrial areas could include more economically-intensive use of land and the implementation of stormwater best management practices where none are present (as part of redevelopment). One example highlighted by the Group was the industrial corridor along Reich's Ford Road, adjacent to the City of Frederick. Incentives for redevelopment in this area could help achieve an increase in stormwater management treatment and the potential establishment of additional riparian buffer between industrial land uses and the Monocacy Scenic River.

The Advisory Group also addressed the need for a distinction between industries like manufacturing, warehousing, and storage, and those businesses that could be considered industrial, but that have traditionally supported agriculture in Frederick County, like seed, soil amendment, implement, and livestock supply facilities.

Lastly, the Advisory Group noted that expansion of industrially zoned land should not occur at the expense of green infrastructure and open space between communities or designated growth areas. This idea was expressed in the "spaces in between" concept highlighted in the Advisory Group's Asset and Risk Mapping Exercise. The "spaces in between" are the spaces that will accommodate the green infrastructure network and help distinctly and spatially separate communities – something that doesn't occur with traditional sprawl development.

3. *Are there districts within the County in which business and green infrastructure have been well integrated and could serve as a model for melding employment uses with green infrastructure? Any examples from the region?*

The redevelopment of the former Alcoa EastAlco site includes a 600+ acre nature reserve, to be established in partnership with the University of Maryland and the local community. No work has been completed on this reserve to date. Advisory Group Members noted that the reserve largely includes areas that would, regardless of intent, be off-limits for development due to current environmental laws and regulations. Whether or not the results will be an example for other industrial development remains to be seen.

The Advisory Group did distinguish those businesses that have incorporated no-mow practices for open space management, have invested in stormwater retrofits or significant tree plantings on or near their properties, or have provided outdoor amenity spaces for use by employees and/or the public. The Advisory Group stated that practices such as these should be promoted in the Plan as they help both attract and retain residents and businesses.

VI. Discussion – Advisory Group Work to Date & Additional Topics for Consideration

As part of the final discussion item on the agenda, the Advisory Group was invited to bring forward topics for discussion that may not have been addressed as part of the first series of Advisory Group Meetings (#1 - #5).

Topics raised included the potential for the County to establish a “Director of Natural Resources” position that would be solely focused on ensuring coordination between various initiatives related to the environment at the County level and would be responsible for coordinating with state agencies that implement or enforce environmental regulation. Staff did indicate that the County’s current, internal efforts at coordination aren’t always publicized, but coordination occurs every day. The idea for such a position did receive support from several members of the Advisory Group who indicated it could also afford opportunities for coordination with the newly established Office of Agriculture and in opportunities for trail development currently undertaken by both the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Public Works. Staff noted it as a topic for consideration in the Green Infrastructure Plan.

The Advisory Group also requested that the incorporation of green infrastructure and multi-modal accessibility should be a key part of all future planning efforts and should be topics considered with each development project (in a similar manner to other adequate public facilities requirements for roads or water and sewer infrastructure). This would ensure the build-out of more trails and walking/biking routes. Climate change impacts and resilience are another topic that could be addressed through planning efforts and could be addressed with each new development project.

Regarding environmental education, local businesses like Fox Haven Farm and Black Ankle Winery were identified as enterprises that should be highlighted for embracing principles of green infrastructure. Additionally, education centers and non-profits like ThorpeWood could be highlighted.

The Advisory Group also discussed the County’s current portfolio of park land, funding for park land (as it relates to Project Open Space and park development timelines), and access to park land. Group members reiterated the importance of siting parks near communities and for providing options to access parks that don’t require the use of a personal vehicle. It was noted that Ballenger Creek Park is routinely identified as the County’s most heavily utilized park in the County’s Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan because it can be accessed by many residents without utilizing a vehicle. The Group also discussed parking capacities at parks and the potential for the Plan to address different ways of handling overflow parking and the construction of sports fields (synthetic surface fields as a source of microplastics).

Lastly, the Advisory Group identified non-profits and community volunteers as a potential support structure for public trails and other green infrastructure projects. It was indicated that the potential to support and promote these types of organizations could be included in the plan.

VII. Planning for Community Input Meetings (and Future Meetings)

Mr. Stine indicated that a time and date has not been set for the next Advisory Group meeting. Livable Frederick will take the next few months to work on the development of the Green Infrastructure Network protocol and associated mapping and to further develop a potential outline for the Plan that incorporates the feedback of the Advisory Group. Additionally, Livable Frederick Staff intend to schedule community meetings for the plan during that time. Information about the dates and times of those meetings will be shared with the Advisory Group. Staff intend to reconvene the Advisory Group in several months to review work in progress and receive additional guidance before workshops commence with the Frederick County Planning Commission.

X. Adjournment

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.